Yuan replied with a statement that he harboured no ambitions for the Presidency, and that his policy had been "to maintain the integrity of the whole Empire/' and *by* peaceful means to bring about the establishment of a really stable Government.

The final decision in favour of abdication was probably taken as a result of a joint telegraphic memorial to the Throne from all the Imperialist Generals and Commanders outside Peking except General Chang Hua-chi. It is supposed to have been prompted by Yuan. Be that as it may, it urged the Throne to accept the Republicans' offer of favourable treatment, and to abdicate immediately, pointing out that the morale of the Imperial troops was being destroyed by failure to pay them, and that further reinforcement was impossible. The terms of favourable treatment had been communicated to the Throne a few days previously. A secret Edict of Abdication was signed on February 3, but not published until nine days later. In the meantime Yuan endeavoured to secure some modifications of the favourable treatment. The Republicans' final terms were communicated on February 7, and on the I2th the three Edicts of Abdication were promulgated.

The first instructed Yuan to "organize with full powers a provisional Republican

Government, and confer with the Republican Army as to the methods of union/' The second emphasized that the Emperor "is understood to resign only his political power, while the Imperial Title is not abolished" and ratified the terms of favourable treatment.

The third instructed officials of all grades to cany